

Thursday, April 22, 2010

Sara Howard, 314-962-1523

Jim Hubbard, 202-225-2671

### **As Nation Celebrates 40th Anniversary of Earth Day...**

**Carnahan: "Sustainability and energy conservation isn't just about the air we breathe or the water we drink. It's about saving money for families, businesses and taxpayers."**

WASHINGTON (Apr. 22, 2010) - As part of ongoing efforts to save taxpayer dollars and reduce the amount of energy used by the federal government, Representatives Russ Carnahan (D-MO) and Judy Biggert (R-IL) along with Senators Tom Carper (D-DE) and Susan Collins (R-ME), today introduced legislation to ensure federal buildings are operated at peak efficiency.

A recent study by the International Facility Management Association showed that for every \$1.00 spent on facility management training, organizations reported receiving an average of \$3.95 in return.

To help deliver this kind of savings to the American taxpayer, the bipartisan

*Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act of 2010*

will require the General Services Administration (GSA) to

identify core competencies necessary for Federal personnel

to maintain Federal buildings in a manner consistent with industry best practices.

GSA

will then work with private industry and institutions of higher learning to make sure that personnel meet those required competencies.

"Sustainability and energy conservation isn't just about the air we breathe or the water we drink. It's about saving money for families, businesses and taxpayers," said

**Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-MO)**

, author of the legislation and co-chair of the Congressional High-Performance Building Caucus.

"If we're going to be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars, in addition to investing in energy efficient buildings we must invest in the people maintaining those buildings so that we recoup the largest energy and cost savings possible."

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included a substantial investment of \$5.5 billion apportioned to GSA to upgrade its facilities. Late last year, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found a lack of proper expertise and training was a major challenge for the federal government in reaching its energy reduction goals (GAO-10-22).

In order to safeguard this substantial investment, the Personnel Training Act will ensure that

GSA has all of the tools necessary to not only retrofit the existing government building stock, but also to ensure that these buildings are properly maintained and operated at their highest performance levels.

"This is an opportunity to lead by example, and demonstrate the immense savings and efficiency that can be achieved by making smart investments in human energy," said **Rep.**

**Judy Biggert (R-IL)**

, co-chair of the Congressional High-Performance Building Caucus. "America's scientists and engineers are making rapid strides in sustainable building technologies and designs, but the full rewards of their work - both to the environment and to taxpayers - cannot be realized unless our building managers have the training to utilize them. The Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act will put federal buildings on the leading edge of energy savings, and it will help build expertise among America's workforce needed for tomorrow's green jobs."

"The federal government is the world's largest institutional user of energy and the largest single owner of facilities. In terms of energy use, the federal government consumes 1.6 percent of the nation's total energy-about \$17.5 billion in annual energy costs," said **Sen. Collins (R-ME)**. "Targeted training will enable us to stress core competencies such as building operations and maintenance, energy management, safety and design functions. Right now, the General Services Administration says that contractors, who operate 97 percent of federal facility management, lack qualified, well-trained people to manage the buildings in the most effective manner. The result is a decline in the expected lifecycle of federal buildings and equipment. We need to ensure that we have the best trained, most qualified workforce operating this vast portfolio of federal assets, totaling more than 500,000 buildings, structures and associated infrastructure worldwide. Training is vital to helping guarantee that taxpayer dollars - used to operate and invest in these facilities - are being spent as efficiently and effectively as possible."

In fiscal year 2008, the energy bill for the Federal Government was \$24.5 billion or about 0.8 percent of total Federal expenditures. Of that \$24.5 billion, over \$7 billion was spent on energy to operate Federal buildings alone.

"Common sense tells us that the cheapest, cleanest energy is the energy that we don't use," said **Sen. Carper (D-DE)**. "To that end, the federal government has spent billions of dollars on technology and hardware to improve the energy efficiency of its facilities.

While that's laudable, we need to do a better job of making sure that the people in charge of our federal buildings have the knowledge and the tools necessary to implement these energy efficiency initiatives to ensure that we get the biggest bang for our buck.

You wouldn't give a race car to an inexperienced driver and expect them to win the Indy 500.

In the same way, we can't expect our

federal buildings to run at peak efficiency if we don't make sure our personnel have adequate

training."

###